

# 2025 Grant Cycle - Phase I Application

Name of Project	Enka Recreation Destination Phase 2
Organization Name	Buncombe County Government
Contact Name	Elizabeth Odderstol
Email	elizabeth.odderstol@buncombenc.gov

## Eligibility

Please complete the questions in this section to confirm your project is eligible for the Tourism Product Development Fund before beginning the application.

Is the applicant a federally recognized non-profit organization or government entity?

Yes

Is the project a festival, cultural event, or other event?

No

Is the grant application for operational expenses only?

No

Is the project located in Buncombe County?

Yes

At the time of application, does the applicant organization have legal control of the property through recorded deed or long-term lease agreement?

Yes

Will the project solely benefit a single lodging owner, lodging property, or be situated on a lodging property?

No

Is the project a major tourism capital project?

Yes

Will the project increase patronage of lodging facilities in Buncombe County by attracting tourists, business travelers, or both, AND further economic development in Buncombe County?

Yes

Will requested grant funds be used for one of the following: (1) Construction of a new location or relocation, or (2) Expansion of an existing location?

Yes

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## Applicant Organization Information

Organization Type

Government Entity

Organization Phone

(828) 203-5685

Organization Physical Address

200 College St  
Asheville, North Carolina, 28801

Organization Mailing Address

200 College St  
Asheville, North Carolina, 28801

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## Primary Contact Information

Please provide the contact information for the primary point of contact for this application.

Name

Allison Dains

Title

Parks & Recreation Director

Email

Allison.Dains@buncombenc.gov

Phone Number

(828) 250-6703

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## Project Details

Physical Address of Project

58 Apac Circle  
Asheville, NC, 28806

**Is your project an expansion of or improvement to an existing facility?**

Yes

**At the time of application, does the applicant organization have legal control of the property through a recorded deed or long-term lease agreement? If property is owned by a municipal partner, such as the City or County, a non-profit organization may provide a letter of support or other agreement with the municipal partner.**

Yes, the applicant organization has legal control of the property through a recorded deed (Applicant owns the property)

**Please describe your project.**

Buncombe County Recreation Services is continuing to develop the Enka Recreation Destination as a dynamic recreation, sports, and family-friendly park complex. The TDA has been a vital partner since the start of our efforts to revitalize the Buncombe County Sports Park, including awards for:

Phase 1 funding requested in 2018 to build amenities such as turf soccer fields, lighting sets, and two miles of greenway – complete

Phase 1B funding requested in 2022 to construct waterline and bathroom – complete

Phase 2 funding requested in 2023 – design underway, currently permitting

In the 2023 request, the TDA awarded Buncombe County Recreation Services' application to begin work on Phase 2 of the Enka Recreation Destination. Buncombe County Recreation Services' initial request was \$6 million, and we were awarded \$4 million. Civil Design Concepts (CDC) has been awarded the contract for design and engineering work on this phase of the park plan. We are working through the permitting processes at this time.

Since the initial application, the funding gap to deliver this project has grown due to rising construction costs and the need to include resiliency features post-Helene. As we look ahead to beginning construction on this second phase, Buncombe County Recreation Services' requests that the TPDF committee fund the remaining \$4.8 million necessary to complete the project. We are currently at a stage in implementation where this funding would ensure the County's ability to deliver the project in a timely manner and with minimal project mobilization delays. Ensuring timely delivery for the Enka Recreation Destination is more important than ever, as our community's sporting facilities were significantly impacted by Hurricane Helene.

In Phase 2, we will continue to position the Buncombe County Sports Park as a family-friendly athletic complex in Western North Carolina, which will enable the county to recruit more regional competitive tournaments and meet the increased need for athletic sports fields locally. Buncombe County Recreation will achieve our goals by merging tournament quality baseball and soccer fields with family-friendly community recreation amenities. These assets will not only support sports tourism by building the spaces necessary for leagues to host tournaments, but they will also create a destination that is inclusive and accessible for members of the community and the families visiting by adding features such as playgrounds, seating and visitor contact stations. The resiliency features will also enable BCSP to better serve as a community hub of resilience in times of need and emergencies for county operations. Overall, this project will continue to improve the quality of life for Western North Carolina residents and attract competitive regional tournaments.

We want to recognize the critical role that the Buncombe County Sports Park played in response to Hurricane Helene as it served as one of the largest Comfort Care Stations, food and water distribution sites in the area, and centralized location for FEMA to work directly with community affected by the hurricane. For four full months, the BCSP played a major role in response to provide basic needs for families, while also serving as one of the only recreational facilities that families could utilize post-storm. After Helene, Buncombe County Recreation seeks to continue building on BCSP's capacity to support our community, including assessing whether the plans for the Buncombe County Parks and Recreation Office

can include a gymnasium, which could add capacity for sporting events and disaster-related community resource space.

Buncombe County Recreation greatly appreciates the TPDF Committee's consideration of the Enka Phase 2 application at this time. Though Buncombe County has committed over \$17 million to this phase of the Enka Recreation Destination development, we are not able to leverage additional general dollars for the funding gap at this time, given the financial impact of Helene on the County's operations and revenues. Additional TPDF funding for this project would ensure that Buncombe County Sports Park is delivered on schedule and continues to serve our community, under both blue and gray skies.

**Provide a detailed description of the project scope of work. For each task / deliverable, include description, cost, and timeline of completion.**

In Phase 2, Enka Recreation Destination is building upon tournament quality assets with additional turf, lights and resilient recreational amenities to solidify the Enka Recreation Destination as an essential asset for community health and travel destination for competitive sports leagues. Sports tourism and tournaments are a well-known draw for visitation with a typical tournament attendance of 2706 attendees per event, including players and spectators. With the loss of 4 turfed fields at the JBL Complex, by bringing additional products online, Buncombe County and the TDA will create a more resilient and sustainable sport tourism market in Western North Carolina. Due to the substantial investment from the TDA, the Buncombe County Sports Park (BCSP) has already greatly increased its capacity and even exceeded the second-year goal we listed in our 2023 application. The 2024 goal was to reach 1,064,985 visitors, and in that year BCSP had 1,108,248 visitors to the park.

To meet this vision for this project, additional turf and lights are a central component that will allow Buncombe County to further engage and invite more diverse audiences to the destination. In a post-hurricane Buncombe County, we are thoughtfully looking to add fields and lighting to grow and sustain the increased demand for soccer and multi-use sports fields. By enhancing and updating grass fields to lighted turf fields, we will be able to increase playable hours both year-round and into the evenings while decreasing maintenance costs.

Increasing the resiliency and safety of this project with elements such as enhanced erosion control measures, solar lighting, and safety guardrails, not only allows for a more sustainable recreational asset, but will continue to serve as an essential asset for Buncombe County as a whole during emergencies. In addition, Buncombe County will be developing several assets for a more family-friendly atmosphere, such as an Indoor Facility, Accessible Playground Assets, and Accessible Spectator Seating. These assets will not only support sports tourism by creating the spaces necessary for leagues to host tournaments but also create a destination that is inclusive and accessible for members of the community and the families visiting.

Phase 2 of the Enka Recreation Destination is estimated to be a \$26.2 million project. The major elements of the project and their associated costs and timelines are:

**Turfing:**

Scope: Fields 3, 4, 5 & 9. Turfing will include safety improvements, such as fencing and stormwater control measures.

Costs: \$5.3 million was the original cost to provide a turf structure to fields 4 & 5-approx. 150,000 SF, Field 3-approx. 69,000 SF, and Field 9-approx. 57,000 SF. Due to current cost escalation at 10% for 2 years, the current estimate is \$6,413,000.

Timeline of Completion: FY 28

**Lighting:**

Scope: Fields 3, 4, & 5

Costs: Musco will be the preferred vendor for this contract to match the lighting existing on fields 1,2,

3and 8. The original price of lighting was estimated at \$595,000.00. Current cost at 10% escalation for 2 years brings current cost to \$719,950

Timeline of Completion: FY 28

Buncombe County Parks and Recreation Office:

Scope: Demolition of the existing Buncombe County Grounds structure and the replacement of this structure with the new Buncombe County Parks and Recreation office and visitor center

Costs: The demolition of the existing structures will be a total cost of \$108,000. According to national trends with new construction costs, this building will cost at \$500 a sq ft cost Total cost - \$10,000,000. With escalation costs at 20% we could see a 2-million-dollar increase. Therefore, the total cost will be \$12,000,000

Timeline of Completion: FY27

Playground

Scope: Address current drainage issues associate with the current playground area.

Costs: Cost estimates for this deliverable is \$950,000. This cost includes drainage design as well as the creation of a new durable playground pad.

Timeline of Completion: FY 28

Visitor Contact Station & Ranger Office

Scope: Buncombe County sports complex we will be completing the renovation of our park ranger office, bathrooms, and concession stand into a family station park office, and designated First Aid area.

Costs: According to national trends, we expected the renovation of this space at the square feet of 2,900 to cost \$495,000. Current cost at 10% escalation for 2 years brings current cost to \$598,950

Timeline of Completion: FY 28

Pavilion

Scope: Replacement of outdated picnic shelter structure with a new.

Costs: This new structure will be Sq Ft- 2,400 per Sq Ft originally estimated to cost\$125 cost –for a total of \$324,000. With an expected 25% cost increase we can expect this number to be \$405,000. Current cost at 10% escalation for 2 years brings current cost to \$490,050

Timeline of Completion: FY 28

Resiliency

Scope: Increasing the resiliency and safety of this project.

Costs: Solar, stormwater management, erosion control/stream bank stabilization (estimated \$1,376,290.75

Timeline of Completion: FY28

To continue growing our capacity to host large tournaments, Buncombe County Recreation Services believes a greater investment in the park's facilities is necessary. As the park has started to host more major tournaments, our Recreation Services team has found great need for a visitor information center, space for tournament hosts and teams to gather, and recreation opportunities for all family members

attending youth sporting events. These facilities will welcome and engage visitors of all ages and leave families with the positive experiences that will encourage them to return in the future.

## Project Milestones

**What is the projected break ground date?** Friday, August 1, 2025

**What is the projected completion date?** Monday, November 30, 2026

**What is the projected opening date?** Tuesday, December 1, 2026

**Please provide other project milestones, if applicable. Please include the date and the milestone description.**

08/01/2024 – Issue RFQ for design and engineering services (Complete)

06/01/2025 – Design and engineering complete for Fields 3,4, 5,& 9

8/01/2025 – Construction Begins for Fields 3,4, 5,&9 (1.5 Years)

11/01/2026- Construction Complete

12/01/2026 - Project Closeout procedures complete and fields open to the public

The project milestones are based on design and construction schedules experienced in phase 1 and are only for the grant request portion of the project.

## Project Financial Information

**What type of funding are you requesting?** Grant

**What is the total budget for your project?** \$26,234,241

**What is your requested funding amount?** \$4,803,411

**List the current mix of non-TPDF funding for your project. Include the source, amount, status, and if the funding is contingent on TPDF funds.**

	Source	Amount	Status
Source 1	Buncombe County	\$17,430,830	Committed
Source 2			
Source 3			

	Source	Amount	Status
Source 4			
Source 5			
Source 6			
Source 7			
Source 8			
Source 9			
Source 10			

**Total Amount of non-TPDF funding**      17,430,830

**If the total amount of non-TPDF funding sources listed above is less than the requested TPDF funding amount. Please describe your plan to raise the remaining amount to meet the 1-to-1 funding match requirement.**

N/A

**If any of the above funding sources are contingent on receiving funding through the Tourism Product Development Fund, please explain below.**

N/A

**Have you received TPDF funding in the past for this specific project?**     

**If yes, Please describe what the previous BCTDA investment(s) specifically funded for your project and why you are applying for funding for this project again.**

Buncombe County has previously received funding from the TPDF grant committee for the following phases of the Enka Recreation Destination:

Phase 1 funding requested in 2018 to build amenities such as turf soccer fields, lighting sets, and two miles of greenway – complete

Phase 1B funding requested in 2022 to construct waterline and bathroom – in progress

Phase 2 funding requested in 2023 – design underway

In this new grant cycle, Buncombe County Recreation asks that the TPDF committee consider our request to fund the remaining \$4.8 million necessary to complete the project. We are currently at a stage in implementation where this funding would ensure the County's ability to deliver the project in a timely manner and with minimal project mobilization delays. This funding will continue to establish the Buncombe County Sports Park as a premier destination for competitive sports, family-friendly amenities, and Buncombe County residents.

## Project Impact

Will the project be able to track the number of visitors to the project through ticket sales, registration, surveys, or other similar methods?

Yes

If applicable, how many visitors does your current operation serve annually?

Since the opening of the fields, the Enka Recreation Destination has had 1,108,248 visitors, which surpassed the estimates in our 2023 application. Given the disruption to services in 2024 from Hurricane Helene, this application will site visitor numbers from 2023.

What is the estimated number of visitors at your project for YEAR 1 of operation?

1,163,660

What is the estimated number of visitors at your project for YEAR 2 of operation?

1,221,843

What is the estimated number of visitors at your project for YEAR 3 of operation?

1,282,935

What are your visitation estimates based on? (Example: existing customer data, ticket sales, research, etc.)

Buncombe County tracks visitors to the Buncombe County Sports Park using a Trafx car counter system. We estimate three visitors per car. This past year, Buncombe County Sports Park had 1,108,248 visitors. Recreation Services estimates that the number of visitors will increase by 5% year over year.

How many days would a typical visitor patronize your project during one visit to Buncombe County?

Out-of-market visitors typically patronize our project two times in one visit.

What is your estimated percentage of visitors to this project who will stay overnight in Buncombe County in paid lodging?

3%

Please describe your current or expected audience.

The Enka Recreation Destination is a family-friendly project that is designed to provide accessible recreation options for diverse age groups and mobility levels. By providing a space where there are numerous opportunities for both competitive and non-competitive recreation, family members can be close to one another while supporting each other in various activities. Creating a synergy between these target audiences will foster demand for the facility and establish Buncombe County Sports Park as a premier recreation destination.

For competitive sports, the Buncombe County Sports Park will continue to attract competitive youth soccer. Our target audience for the turf fields includes youth and adult competitive sports teams from across North Carolina, as well as travel teams from nearby states. Our efforts to host tournaments for soccer leagues has led to an increase in overnight stays and encourages repeat visits.

The Buncombe County Sports Park’s family-friendly recreation facilities create a safe space for families



who visit to be able to enjoy multiple options for recreation, which is essential for cultivating active lifestyles. The community-focused elements of the project, such as the accessible playground and walking track will increase local interest in active living, sports, and park programming, further positioning the County as an outdoor recreation and sports destination.

To elaborate further on the question above, of the overall visitors to the Buncombe County Sports Park, 3% stay in paid accommodations. Over 90% of tournament visitors, an estimated 32,400 out-of-market, spend the night in paid accommodations. By increasing the number of tournaments at the Buncombe County Sports Park, we will continue to increase the number of out-of-market visitors to this attraction.

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## Terms of Agreement

Please read each of the following statements and acknowledge that you understand and agree to them by checking the boxes. Applications cannot be submitted unless this field is completed.

### Disclsoure for the Public Record

As a public authority, the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority is subject to Chapter 132 of the North Carolina General Statutes. Therefore, any and all aspects of this application must be made available by the BCTDA to any party, public or private, upon request without exception. If you are concerned that the distribution of any of your application materials may do irreparable damage to you, your organization, or associated parties, the BCTDA highly recommends that you seek alternative funding in lieu of TPDF funds.

### Project Monitoring

I hereby acknowledge that if I am awarded TPDF funding, I will be required to submit an annual report by January 15 of each year during the term of the agreement, with the term commencing on the effective date and continuing for four years after the completion date. Reports include marketing plans and methodologies for capturing annual and out-of-market visitation, up-to-date room night projections, and copies of survey instruments used for data among other requirements.

### BCTDA Marketing

I hereby acknowledge that certain information from my application, such as the project description, timeline, and leadership, may be used by the BCTDA at its sole discretion for the promotion and marketing of the TPDF program and the region as a tourism destination.

### Completed Application

I hereby acknowledge that I have completed this application in good faith and have done so in full compliance with the law. I have made no attempt to falsify or misconstrue facts or data anywhere in this application. The information contained in this application is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

### Terms and Conditions

Accepted